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Chair:	Mr. Djani	(Indonesia)
later:	Mr. Díaz de la Guardia (Vice-Chair)	(Spain)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/71-76-E/2016/55, A/71/190, A/71/210, A/71/215, A/71/217 and A/71/376)

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(c) Disaster risk reduction (A/71/230)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind (A/71/216)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/71/216)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/71/216)

(g) Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/71/25)

(h) Harmony with Nature (A/71/266)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/71/220)

(j) Sustainable mountain development (A/71/256)

1. **Mr. Thomson** (Fiji), President of the General Assembly, said that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change were the moral imperatives of the day. Taken together, those agreements provided humanity with a universal masterplan that — if implemented urgently, effectively and at scale — would eliminate extreme poverty, empower women and girls, build peaceful and inclusive societies, increase prosperity and combat climate change.

2. However, there were serious challenges that would need to be overcome in order to be successful. Those included slow and uncertain economic growth; volatility in commodity prices; extreme poverty; entrenched inequality between and within nations; unemployment and underemployment; climate change and environmental degradation; intractable conflicts; mass flows of refugees and migrants; systematic violations of human rights; and the denial of the rights of women and girls. The work of the Second Committee would closely impact the international community's success in implementing global development.

3. He intended to make meaningful progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals the principal objective of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. To that end, the Sustainable Development Goal team within his Office was finalizing an implementation strategy that focused on three tracks. Sustained engagement would be provided to support successful outcomes from previously mandated Sustainable Development Goal events and processes.

4. The first track of the implementation strategy included the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) to be held in Quito, where the international community would look at ways to make cities and human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, which would build on momentum following the entry into force of the Paris Agreement, including by scaling up adaptation, mitigation and financing support to developing countries, and which would facilitate transitions to clean energy, and to resilient, low carbon economies; and the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, to be held in New York in June 2017.

5. The second track consisted of supporting existing efforts by both the United Nations system and Member States to drive strategic partnerships for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, he, together with his Special Envoy and Special Advisor on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, would be travelling to and participating actively in key events.

6. The third track was to back signature events throughout the year that would lay the foundation for sustained action in key areas right up until the end of 2030. That included raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially among children and youth; fostering and sustaining peace; empowering women and girls; and securing better financing for sustainable development. Over the coming weeks he would share more information with all delegations about the Sustainable Development Goals implementation plan and would be relying on their support in ensuring the success of that work.

7. The Second Committee would be considering a large number of resolutions during the current session covering a broad range of issues of critical importance, including information and communications technology, international trade, debt, and migration and development, as well as many other specific issues that were relevant to the achievement of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, and to the global development agenda more broadly.

8. While all those matters were vital, consideration of the operational activities of the United Nations through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was also critical. The resolution on that review would shape and define how effectively, efficiently and coherently the United Nations system delivered on the ground for the next four years. It would have critical implications for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as other relevant outcomes. He called on all the delegations to take an open-minded and comprehensive approach to their deliberations. Lives might depend on it.

9. Another critical issue for the session would be addressing means of implementation, which remained fundamental to many countries in special situations, including African countries, small island developing States, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and countries in post-conflict situations. The specific requirements of the poor in middle-income countries also needed to be considered.

10. It was clear that in addition to official development assistance (ODA), there was also a need to broaden the sources from which financing was drawn, including domestic resources, innovative sources of financing, strategic partnerships and private investments. Improved capacity-building and increased technology transfer were also vital, and further South-South cooperation should be promoted with a view to exchanging lessons learned, enabling sustained economic growth and complementing North-South and triangular cooperation.

11. Pursuant to the Committee's request at the previous session, significant work had been undertaken to align the agenda of the General Assembly with the 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals. That process, which had been ably led by the Permanent Representative of Colombia and supported by the Chairs of the First, Second and Third Committees and the President of the Economic and Social Council, aimed to ensure that the overall work of the General Assembly, from the plenary session to the Main Committees, as well as of the Economic and Social Council, would contribute effectively and efficiently to the implementation of relevant frameworks.

12. A comprehensive discussion on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals should continue, and he looked forward to the Committee's guidance and proposals in that regard. He had undertaken to meet regularly with the President of the Economic and Social Council and the President of the Security Council to strengthen cooperation and coordination of their work. He would also be informing Member States about each of his meetings and the scope of discussions with them, and with the Secretary-General.

13. Furthermore, he would support efforts by the President of the Economic and Social Council to ensure that the next session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development would continue to build political momentum for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

14. Lastly, he expressed his strong support for efforts by the Chair to improve the Committee's working methods, including in terms of time management, the

timely submission of draft texts and the organization of side events and joint meetings. Addressing those issues upfront should allow for adequate time to be dedicated to the negotiation of resolutions and enable the Committee to conclude its work in a timely fashion. He and his team were deeply committed to supporting the Committee's work during the current session.

15. **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" (A/71/212), said that the report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 70/201 and summarized recent developments deriving from landmark sustainable development conferences, whose central legacy included the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The report addressed the 2016 high-level political forum, the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and its annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals.

16. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/71/76-E/2016/55), he said that the report explored how the efforts of the United Nations system to effectively mainstream the economic, social and environmental dimensions had acquired new urgency following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Its recommendations included continuing: to align activities with the 2030 Agenda; to support a more holistic approach to conflict prevention; to support United Nations leadership development by connecting field leaders to global knowledge and leadership learning; and to report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum.

17. He then introduced the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea" (A/71/190). The report, which was based on the responses of States Members of the United Nations to a questionnaire, summarized recent national, regional and global activities in the areas of assessment, monitoring, awareness-raising, information-sharing, capacity-building, and partnerships and cooperation.

18. He went on to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on entrepreneurship for development (A/71/210), which had been prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The report reviewed progress made on the promotion of entrepreneurship over the last two years, identifying best practices and measures taken in support of entrepreneurship at all levels. The report illustrated the changing scenario for entrepreneurship promotion brought about by the 2030 Agenda and reflected on the relationship between entrepreneurship and the Sustainable Development Goals.

19. He then turned to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "International Decade for Action, 'Water for Life', 2005-2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources" (A/71/260). The report outlined the activities carried out through that Decade, including the elements and organizations that had been crucial to its success and key findings to be considered for further United Nations activities directed towards the promotion and implementation of internationally agreed goals and targets associated with water.

20. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/71/220), he said that it underlined how continuing technological advances, rapidly falling costs, and successful deployment and use of renewable energy systems in developed and developing countries had demonstrated their potential to satisfy energy requirements and replace other energy sources. However, uncertainty over the future of renewable sources of energy remained, as oil and natural gas prices had plummeted over the past year.

21. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (A/71/320), he said that the report highlighted activities undertaken by a wide range of stakeholders. To further strengthen accountability and international cooperation, Member States could consider maximizing synergies across resolutions that were

relevant to energy in order to promote holistic support for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 7 and its nexus with other Sustainable Development Goals.

22. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations (A/71/265), he said that the report was part of an ongoing United Nations initiative to follow up on the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway). Considering a range of activities undertaken at the national and regional levels to advance the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea, the report also briefly analysed the possible implications of designating the Caribbean Sea a special area within the context of sustainable development. The Annex to the report contained a full-fledged assessment of the Association of Caribbean States on progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

23. He then introduced the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (A/71/267 and A/71/267/Add.1). The former document was the main report, which addressed progress made on the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and the commitments and partnerships announced at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. It was the second annual report since the adoption of the Samoa Pathway and provided examples of activities, including domestic implementation, development assistance and partnerships. The latter document was the addendum report, which outlined early findings of the comprehensive review of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system support for small island developing States.

24. Turning to the note by the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/71/266), he recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/208, had decided to initiate a virtual dialogue on Harmony with Nature among experts on Earth jurisprudence worldwide. The summary contributions by 120 international experts focused on how to reshape human governance systems to operate from an Earth-centred rather than from a human-centred perspective, including a fundamental respect for the Earth and its natural cycles.

25. He then introduced the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable mountain development (A/71/256), which had been prepared with input from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Mountain Partnership secretariat, in collaboration with Governments, relevant agencies of the United Nations system and other organizations. The report underlined the importance of including mountain-specific policies and mountain communities in decision-making processes and the importance of capacity development to improve community livelihoods while also conserving and restoring mountain ecosystems.

26. Lastly, he introduced the note by the Secretary-General entitled "Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions" (A/71/216), transmitting to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Severe Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

27. At the request of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Secretary-General had convened a high-level ceremony in New York on 22 April 2016, the day the Paris Agreement had been opened for signatures. On that day, 175 parties had signed the Agreement, the largest number of signatories to an international agreement on the opening day since the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea had been opened for signature. As at October 2016, 191 parties had signed. The first entry into force threshold of 55 parties had been surpassed at a special event convened by the Secretary-General on 21 September 2016, when the number of parties had reached 60. The second minimum threshold of 55 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions had been surpassed on 5 October 2016, pursuant to which the Agreement would enter into force on 4 November 2016. The First Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement would be convened in conjunction with the twenty-second session of the

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which would open in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 7 November 2016.

28. The rapid entry into force of the Paris Agreement was nothing short of remarkable and was a powerful manifestation of the determination of Governments to accelerate progress towards low emissions and climate-resilient development. Attention was therefore turning to implementation and delivery of outcomes in the real economy. The unity of purpose and integrated vision for the future reflected in the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda would need to set in motion economic, societal and environmental transformations. Business as usual would not deliver on the climate objectives, which required an unprecedented rate of de-carbonization. The challenges would be enormous but the rewards of success even greater.

29. Taken together, the 2015 outcomes defined one universal agenda for well-being for all societies. At its core, that agenda was about achieving human welfare and prosperity through respecting natural cycles, ecosystem services, and planetary boundaries.

30. The Paris Agreement, which was founded on national leadership and action, buttressed international cooperation and support for developing countries. The intended nationally determined contributions and national adaption plans were being turned into actions, policy interventions and investment plans in the context of the broader national development plans reflecting the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations system had an important role to play in that context: to become an agent of change and contribute to the global transformation, it must refocus and reorient its partnership with Governments as they continued to develop and implement their sustainable-development and climate-resilient low emission strategies.

31. Governments alone could not achieve all the ambitious aims of both the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, and it would be essential for the global climate action agenda to gather support and commitments from progressive cities, territories, regions and States, in addition to businesses and investors who had embraced the opportunities of positive change.

32. One of the objectives of the Paris Agreement was to make finance flows consistent with the pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development, which underlined the centrality of decisions on investment in determining global emission trends. To be effective, climate policy and regulation needed to redirect financial flows from unsustainable to sustainable investments, which would also require reform of the global financial system.

33. **Mr. Glasser** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/71/230), said that the report contained a section on addressing the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the 2015-2016 El Niño phenomenon. In the preceding few days alone, the experience of Haiti with Hurricane Matthew had demonstrated how the costs of disasters fell disproportionately on low-income countries. During the previous year, Member States and other actors had begun revising their plans and strategies to align them with the Framework, and the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction had supported the establishment and strengthening of national disaster loss databases in 90 countries.

34. The open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction was in the process of creating a set of indicators to form the foundation of a new monitoring instrument, the Sendai Framework monitor, to be presented at the 2017 meeting of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. Many of the new partnerships established would contribute to implementation not only of the Sendai Framework, but also of other instruments. For example, the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative was relevant to the Paris Agreement and to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 11 and 13 on poverty, cities and climate, respectively.

35. Both the 2017 Global Platform and the regional platforms would provide input for the relevant discussions at the high-level political forum over the coming years. Similarly, the revised United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience would strengthen system-wide coherence in support of the Sendai Framework. However,

substantial increases in investment in the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Relief Assistance would be required if the seven global targets of the Sendai Framework were to be achieved by 2030.

36. **Mr. Dias** (Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat), introducing via recorded video message the report of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/71/216, section III), said that the outcomes of first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation held in 2016 included recommendations on a range of measures that could be undertaken by parties to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; guidelines for the next cycle of national reporting; and recommendations on enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention protocols.

37. The nineteenth and twentieth meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice had been convened in 2015 and 2016, respectively, and had proposed recommendations on a number of issues with a view to halting biodiversity loss, improving ecosystem resilience, enhancing the provision of ecosystem services, mitigating and adapting to climate change and improving human well-being, while reducing environmental risks and scarcities.

38. The report also included detailed information on other programmes and initiatives undertaken under the Convention and its protocols over the past year, including the progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Effective follow-up to the 2030 Agenda was essential; the priority themes for the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity would include integrating and mainstreaming biodiversity across all sectors.

39. **Ms. de Caen** (Deputy Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States, United Nations Development Programme) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/71/217), which provided an update on the progress made to give effect to the successive resolutions adopted by the General Assembly concerning the environmental disaster caused in 2006 by the destruction of oil storage tanks near the Jiyeh power plant in Lebanon. She said that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had provided documents with a view to reassessing the environmental impact of the spill in April 2016. However, a review by the United Nations Environment Programme had concluded that those documents did not offer new findings or scientifically significant data that differed so substantially from the data used in the original study that a change in the assessment would be warranted. In June 2016, the European Union, in the framework of its grant to the Government of Lebanon, signed in 2015, for the protection and sustainable development of maritime resources in Lebanon, had awarded a contract for the treatment and disposal of the remaining solid waste from the 2006 oil spill. She noted that the Government of Israel had not assumed responsibility for the compensation requested, and that the Secretary-General had again invited the international donor community to contribute to the Eastern Mediterranean Oil Spill Restoration Trust Fund, which had received no contributions to date.

40. **Mr. Ahmad** (Deputy Director, New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme), introducing the report of the second session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/71/25), said that the report reflected the deliberations of more than 120 ministerial level representatives, as well as participants from civil society, academia, business and the scientific community who had met in Nairobi in May 2016 to consider the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda. The session had adopted 25 resolutions, which covered key issues concerning, inter alia: education; management of natural resources; disposal of chemical and other forms of waste; marine and wildlife protection; and protection of the environment in areas of conflict. While the report particularly highlighted resolution 2/5 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly and entitled "Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", the overall focus during the session had been on the intrinsic linkages between a healthy environment, human well-being and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

41. Air pollution had been identified as the world's largest single environmental health risk, with some 7 million people worldwide dying prematurely every year from exposure to poor air quality. In some developing countries, preparing a meal was a major

risk due to indoor air pollution, which claimed about 4.3 million deaths a year, mostly of women and children. Outdoor air pollution also disproportionately affected the poor, who lacked means of protection. Moreover, exposure to chemicals and harmful waste, addressed in resolution 2/7 of the United Nations Environment Assembly and covered by a number of Sustainable Development Goals, affected the daily lives of 64 million people living in informal settlements. Exposure to asbestos and lead alone accounted for 107,000 and 654,000 deaths each year respectively.

42. The United Nations Environment Assembly had also adopted resolution 2/20 on the proposed medium-term strategy for 2018-2021 and programme of work and budget for 2018-2019, which identified seven priority areas, each with an outcome map and a specific goal aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The overarching aim was to increase environmental resilience while linking sustainable development to socioeconomic benefits. That outcome reflected the vision agreed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which had strengthened the environmental pillar of the framework for sustainable development.

43. Turning to the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the global assessment of sand and dust storms (A/71/376) pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/195, he said that the recommendations contained in that assessment, developed in conjunction with the World Meteorological Organization and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, were aimed at predicting such events and reducing their impact, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

44. Lastly, noting that the United Nations Environment Assembly had reviewed its own cycle, he said that the Assembly had decided to hold its regular sessions in odd-numbered years, beginning with its third session in December 2017, in Nairobi, Kenya.

45. **Mr. Bukuru** (Chief, New York Liaison Office of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat), delivering a statement on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat, said that, after taking into account political and social instability, it was environmental degradation and desertification in particular that were the driving forces behind the forced migration of nearly a billion people. The vast majority of migrants now came from the driest areas of Africa, Asia and, to a lesser extent, Central America. Many were also vulnerable to obscurantist and violent ideologies such as that of Boko Haram. The goal of leaving no one behind established by the 2030 Agenda therefore targeted precisely that population, whose countries of origin were plagued by land degradation, desertification and drought.

46. The eradication of poverty was the overarching goal of sustainable development; it was therefore critical for countries hoping to meet target 15.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2018 to strengthen their capacities and reset their national priorities in line with the principle of land degradation neutrality. Fortunately, more than 100 countries had agreed to voluntary targets. In that regard, the Changwon initiative of the Republic of Korea and the Ankara Initiative established by the Convention's Turkish presidency were particularly to be commended.

47. In the context of climate change and unsustainable development practices, scientists were predicting an increase in the frequency and length of future droughts, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where rain-fed agriculture represented 95 per cent of the land under cultivation. It was therefore high time to transition from a reactive to a proactive approach to droughts. He particularly wished to congratulate Namibia, one of the world's driest countries, for hosting the African Drought Conference in August 2016, which had considered drought-related early warning systems, risk assessment and risk reduction measures.

48. Turning to the note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/71/216), he said that a number of important measures had been established since ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including at the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, held in Ankara in October 2015. Monitoring mechanisms on land cover, land productivity and carbon stocks had also been adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity.

Such links across those three conventions exemplified the kinds of synergies that would harmonize system-wide efforts to promote sustainable development.

49. In addition to detailed information on the specific measures taken to advance target 15.3, which sought to achieve a world without land degradation, a World Day to Combat Desertification had been observed in June 2016 in Beijing, with the participation of the Secretary-General and the Prime Minister of China, among other high level officials. He welcomed the commitment of China to combat desertification and drought and its offer to host the next Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in September 2017.

50. Lastly, he urged the Committee to view land degradation neutrality as an accelerator for the achievement of other Sustainable Development Goals. Donors and international organizations should be encouraged to provide sufficient financial support to ensure its timely attainment.

51. **Ms. Chan** Yuping (Special Policy Advisor, New York Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) introduced the note by the Secretary-General entitled "Implementation of World Wildlife Day" (A/71/215), transmitting the report prepared by the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. She said that the Office had worked closely with the secretariat to organize the global observance of World Wildlife Day over the previous three years, and several achievements were worth noting. First, the designation of the Day had been widely welcomed, and it had quickly become the most important annual global event for wildlife conservation. Second, the Day was invaluable in promoting public awareness of the importance of conservation of ecosystems, people and economies; it provided an opportunity for discussion and debate on topical issues, served to foster robust new partnerships and cooperation, and increase political will to protect wildlife. Third, the celebration of the Day in 2015 had paved the way for the adoption of a resolution on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife. Fourth, at the recent seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the importance of the Day had once again been acknowledged by the States Parties, and a new resolution had been adopted that called on them to improve the enforcement of wildlife protection laws, reduce demand for illegally traded wild animals and plants, and recognize the multifaceted contributions of wildlife to the livelihoods of poor rural communities.

52. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

53. **Mr. Shilla** (United Republic of Tanzania), drawing attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 70/206 (A/71/216, section II), said that he wished to know more about how land degradation neutrality could accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and how the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification could be a dependable instrument in addressing drought.

54. **Mr. Bukuru** (Chief, New York Liaison Office of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat) responded that most people left behind were those living in arid lands, where there was a concentration of hunger, poverty and migration, and where women bore the brunt of land degradation and desertification. Investment in helping those billions of people would help to achieve security, poverty eradication, the empowerment of women as agents of change in degraded areas, and an improvement in children's health. Investment would yield quick returns, and empowerment of communities affected by land degradation and drought would also improve both ecosystems and the living conditions of affected populations. Land degradation neutrality would therefore accelerate the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals.

55. The United Republic of Tanzania, for example, had recently experienced such severe drought that the response of the international community was no longer viable or effective. Proactive investment in early warning systems and vulnerability assessments would enable countries in similar situations to emphasize protection rather than recovery. The affected regions, populations and institutions needed to be prepared to deal with more frequent droughts. There was also a need for cooperation and sharing of experiences and success stories. Well planned and coordinated drought action had a positive effect across sectors and borders, so that the poorest and most vulnerable parts of society would benefit the most. It was therefore time to invest

in proactive policies to address the scourge of drought and build resilience to drought.

56. **Ms. Pamaranon** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reiterated the Group's unwavering commitment to work tirelessly for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, reaffirmed all of the principles adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and further reaffirmed that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be guided by the principles laid down in paragraph 74 of that Agenda.

57. While the preceding year's four major conference outcomes were all related to the work of the Second Committee, she said that the real work of translating those ambitious visions into concrete actions remained was still ahead. In that context, the Group first wished to highlight that, in order to leave no one behind, poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions remained an essential requirement for sustainable development. Second, the universality of the 2030 Agenda should not eclipse the challenges and needs of developing countries, especially those in special situations, or the specific challenges facing middle-income countries, countries in conflict or post-conflict situations or those under foreign occupation. Third, implementing the 2030 Agenda at all levels required a revitalized global partnership, with North-South cooperation as the main channel for development cooperation, and the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 17. Fourth, technology was a key means of implementation and an important lever of change for achieving sustainable development.

58. During the current session, the Group would strive to build on the progress already achieved through forward-looking and action-oriented draft resolutions that were aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, while that Agenda should remain the Committee's primary focus, it was also vital to continue implementing existing sustainable development commitments, including under Agenda 21, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the outcome document of Rio+20.

59. Given the particularities and vulnerabilities of small island developing States, the Group reiterated the importance of the Samoa Pathway as a precondition for the successful attainment of the 2030 Agenda by that group of countries. Similarly, the Sendai Framework had established a valuable road map for developing countries, which risked losing their development gains to unpredictable natural disasters and health crises.

60. The nexus of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss posed a serious threat to sustainable development. Such challenges must be addressed through a combination of existing mechanisms, including the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Environmental Assembly and the Paris Agreement, which would shortly enter into force.

61. The Group was also striving to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. It therefore stressed the need to promote clean and renewable energy as well as institutional arrangements to follow up on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7. In that context, the Group noted that there were areas and Goals that were not covered by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council, or were partly covered elsewhere in the United Nations system. In the future, building on the new sustainable development framework, such emerging and relevant issues could become new items on the agenda of the Second Committee. Those could include overarching issues in the Goals, such as infrastructure, water, energy, industrialization, and sustainable consumption and production.

62. The relevance and impact of the Second Committee's work had expanded and was becoming more inclusive and cross-cutting than ever. As a universal norm-setting body of the United Nations, the Committee had a central role to play in promoting sustainable development.

63. **Mr. Suan** (Myanmar), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN was committed to maintaining and enhancing its partnership with the United Nations. That had been clearly demonstrated by its adoption of a new five-year plan of action for 2016 to 2020 between ASEAN and the United Nations, adopted at the eighth ASEAN-United Nations Summit held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic; and by the meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers with

the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the current session of the General Assembly, held on 24 September 2016 at Headquarters in New York, at which agreement had been reached on establishing a roadmap to guide the alignment of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 with the 2030 Agenda.

64. A holistic approach was needed for the successful implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 targets. In that regard, added value would be gained from strengthened partnerships at the regional and global levels in which civil society, academia and the business sector were included. For its part, ASEAN had recently made notable progress in the energy and education sectors. For example, it had commenced the initial implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation 2016-2020, which would make a significant difference in energy security and contribute to the attainment of the development goals in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner. Similarly, the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth, adopted at the twenty-eighth ASEAN Summit held in Vientiane on 6 September 2016, aimed to foster a more systematic and coherent approach to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and lifelong learning under Sustainable Development Goal 4.

65. However, increasing health challenges that transcended national borders were a cause for concern, especially in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda. ASEAN therefore welcomed the recent adoption by the General Assembly of the Political Declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on antimicrobial resistance. Antimicrobial resistance had become one of the biggest threats to global health, as it had the capacity to kill millions of people each year.

66. ASEAN was also concerned by the growing frequency and intensity of natural disasters as a result of climate change. It was committed to addressing such challenges, including through the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, adopted in 2005, and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance, established in 2011 in Bali, Indonesia.

67. Lastly, ASEAN was a region rich in biodiversity. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity in the Philippines and the ASEAN Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 would complement the efforts of its member States to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15 regarding the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources and terrestrial ecosystems.

68. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, welcomed the focus on the Samoa Pathway in the agenda item under consideration as an important opportunity to highlight the unique vulnerabilities and challenges facing small island States. Recalling that members of the Alliance had actively contributed to the 2016 high-level political forum, he said that it had provided an important platform for small island States to share best practices and identify synergies and new solutions. Similarly, the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework launched during the seventieth session of the General Assembly had created a valuable new instrument to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between small island States and their partners.

69. Nevertheless, the report of the Secretary-General on the Samoa Pathway (A/71/267) showed that, despite three Programmes of Action whose mandates had almost doubled over the years, there had not been commensurate support for their implementation. There was a clear need for improved coordination and coherence between the Small Island Developing States Unit within the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the corresponding Unit within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. More details were also needed on the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States.

70. The effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, increasingly extreme weather events and ocean acidification, posed a threat not simply to the development of small island developing States but to their very survival. While the Paris Agreement would soon enter into force, it would be insufficient without action on mitigation and adaptation. The need for effective disaster risk reduction was also paramount, inasmuch as small island developing States were disproportionately impacted by natural disasters. The catastrophic weather events of 2016, including cyclones, flooding, hurricanes and drought, showed

that gains in development would be vulnerable to reversal without expanded investment in resilience, monitoring and prevention, and increased efforts in preparedness and response. Hurricane Matthew, which had caused some 900 deaths in Haiti and significant damage to infrastructure on that island and elsewhere in the Caribbean, was a prime example.

71. In that connection, the transition to renewable energy was vital for mitigating climate change. Such a shift would not only help countries move to low-carbon economies and provide new areas of technological investment and innovation but would also reduce the dependence of small island States on costly imported fossil fuels. However, despite adopting new regulatory and policy approaches, such countries lacked the requisite funding, infrastructure and capacity to act independently.

72. It was therefore critical for the 2030 Agenda to be adopted as the guiding framework not only by small island developing States but also by the United Nations system as a whole, including international financial institutions. Indeed, unless all international organizations aligned their support programmes with the terminology and categories of that Agenda, the negotiations achieved over the previous two years could not be successfully implemented. All Member States should appreciate the need for serious change over the coming 14 years in order to realize "the future we want".

73. **Mr. Marshall** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the entry into force of the Paris Agreement would be the fastest of any international agreement adopted by the United Nations. However, as adequate financing, including new sources of funding, would be necessary to support efforts to combat climate change, CARICOM called for resource mobilization as well as action on the pledges made to the Green Climate Fund. Simplified procedures that would best enable small island developing States to access funding must also be established.

74. His delegation called upon the international community to offer assistance to the Bahamas, Haiti and Jamaica, as those countries had been severely impacted by Hurricane Matthew. Natural disasters were a reminder of the perpetual threat that small island and low-lying coastal developing States faced due to the adverse effects of climate change, threats which would significantly undermine those countries' efforts at poverty eradication and sustainable development. The approximately 390 natural disasters suffered by Caribbean countries between 1980 and 2015 had caused gross domestic product losses of over 2 per cent per annum.

75. The Samoa Pathway had highlighted the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States; some of the issues that needed to be tackled were debt relief, non-communicable diseases, poverty eradication, the environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation. CARICOM urged the Second Committee to ensure full and systematic support for the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, its annual review and its future midterm review. The Sendai Framework also gave the international community the means to promote coherent and integrated efforts to strengthen national and regional disaster risk reduction programmes through enhanced international cooperation.

76. CARICOM called on the international community to continue to support the biennial resolution on the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea, including through the provision of finance, technological support and capacity-building; it also sought to have the Caribbean Sea recognized as a special area.

77. Lastly, CARICOM remained fully committed to the three goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity: conservation, sustainable use, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of biodiversity; and to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environment authority.

78. **Mr. Cortorreal** (Dominican Republic), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that despite the important progress made, poverty, inequality and growing economic, social and environmental challenges must be addressed in order to help developing countries achieve sustainable development, including the most vulnerable countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and middle-income countries. The eradication of poverty in all its

forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, was indispensable for sustainable development.

79. The implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda required the unequivocal commitment of the international community as a whole; ODA would continue to play an important role in that regard. Developed countries should honour their long-standing ODA commitments, including by establishing binding timelines for their delivery and for other forms of North-South cooperation. Moreover, South-South and triangular cooperation had a particular and differentiated role to play as a complement to, but not as a substitute for, North-South cooperation.

80. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda had recognized that it was necessary to address the complex and diverse needs of middle-income countries, including through multidimensional poverty measures, continuing ODA and other forms of concessional finance. The high-level political forum was the key organ of the United Nations system for the monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda.

81. The regional dimension was important in sustainable development; linkages between the high-level political forum, regional commissions and other relevant regional bodies should therefore be strengthened. The importance of participation by civil society and other stakeholders should be recognized, while taking into account national plans and policies. With regard to financing for development, CELAC supported the revitalization of the global partnership for development and stressed that sustainable development must be tackled through an integrated and holistic approach.

82. CELAC rejected the application of all unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impeded the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. National capacity-building must be country-driven, reflecting national needs, priorities and sustainable development strategies. Greater integration and coherence across the United Nations development system was needed to avoid a fragmented approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

83. The upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review should take action on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system and provide strategic guidance to Member States regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

84. *Mr. Díaz de la Guardia (Spain), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

85. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that national ownership and leadership were vitally important for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For least developed countries, however, international development cooperation was also essential to ensure that no one was left behind. Consequently, the international community must deliver on its commitments to least developed countries as stipulated in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, while the United Nations system must further strengthen its normative and operational support to those countries. In turn, the high-level political forum should remain the central platform for following up on and monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, during the forum, focused and evidence-based discussions should be held on the special challenges faced by least developed countries.

86. The entry into force of the Paris Agreement was a major breakthrough that should encourage the international community to reaffirm its commitment to creating a net-zero carbon economy by the second half of the century. Although least developed countries were not responsible for climate change, they were the worst affected. As adequate resources and access to technology were essential for them to address climate change, the Green Climate Fund should make available all necessary resources, with the goal of mobilizing $100 billion per year by 2020. The allocation of adaptation and mitigation funds should supplement ODA in a fair, equitable and proportional fashion.

87. Desertification, land degradation and drought continued to hamper the sustainable development efforts of least developed countries; the loss of fertile land, often the only asset of poor communities, had increased poverty and food insecurity levels. A billion hectares in least developed countries were affected by desertification in Africa, leading to estimated losses of $9 billion a year. Furthermore, millions had already been uprooted from their traditional lands as a result of land degradation and desertification, which often sparked armed conflicts and contributed to political

instability, starvation and social breakdown in the region. Increased international support was therefore essential to address such challenges for least developed countries.

88. Disasters posed one of the biggest risks of derailing global human progress in the coming decades. A transformative change, as contained in the Sendai Framework, was required to effectively manage and mitigate disasters. The decision to conduct an in-depth analysis of crisis mitigation and resilience-building for least developed countries was therefore welcome. Support would be needed from all Member States to establish a crisis mitigation and resilience-building mechanism for least developed countries.

89. As more than half of the 1.3 billion people worldwide who lacked access to electricity lived in least developed countries, access to affordable energy was a fundamental challenge for most of those countries, where about 75 per cent of people lacked access to electricity and 91 per cent to modern fuels. Without affordable and sustainable energy, least developed countries could not structurally transform their economies. Those countries would need to make remarkable progress to ensure access to modern energy services for all by 2030, including by significantly upgrading their supply, transmission and distribution infrastructures and technologies.

90. **Ms. Singh** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, recalled that 2015 had seen a number of important milestones, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement; that cooperation with small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries had been scaled up through the adoption of a number of specific agreements; and that Habitat III would shortly be held in Ecuador to adopt the New Urban Agenda, which was based on the belief that the quest for a sustainable future would increasingly be won or lost in the world's cities.

91. Nevertheless, she said that sustainable development would not be achieved if half of the world's population was left behind. Hence the importance of advancing gender equality so that women and girls were fully empowered and could live free from the fear of discrimination, coercion and violence, with agency over their bodies and lives. Women and girls must be meaningfully engaged as stakeholders and decision-makers who were able to contribute to, and benefit from, the development of their communities and countries.

92. Australia, Canada and New Zealand were committed to a sustainable future that balanced the economic, social and environmental pillars to achieve tangible results. However, development challenges could not be solved by Governments alone: citizens, non-governmental organizations and the private sector must also be engaged. The United Nations system must work coherently to support national priorities, responding flexibly to the needs of individual countries. The Second Committee had an important role to play in that regard. It must avoid any action that moved backwards, reopened old debates or renegotiated already agreed texts. The Committee was at a crossroads: it could either catalyse action for the implementation of universally agreed frameworks or risk declining into ineffectiveness and irrelevance.

93. **Mr. Parenti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that the 2030 Agenda required a paradigm shift in the working methods of the Second Committee. In particular, the treatment of the agenda item on sustainable development must be reconsidered, as the current situation made it challenging for all delegations to give appropriate attention to the important issues and resolutions under consideration. There was no need for a substantive resolution on Agenda 21, for example, as technical updates would suffice where substantive discussions had taken place elsewhere. Similarly, it was not necessary to have a resolution on Habitat III in the Second Committee as such matters should be discussed in Ecuador at the forthcoming Conference.

94. Following ratification by the European Union, the 55 per cent emission threshold had been crossed, thus triggering the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on 4 November 2016. Nearly190 countries had made commitments under the Paris Agreement, including plans to curb greenhouse gas emissions; many countries had also developed their first comprehensive strategies to move towards a more sustainable future. The Paris Agreement defined climate change as an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet, which was especially true for

the countries most vulnerable to the negative impact of climate change, such as small island developing States. In addition to Sustainable Development Goal 13, there were 12 other Goals involved in taking action on climate change. Thus, through the Paris Agreement, the international community had committed itself to binding obligations to transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and climate-resilient economy.

95. The European Union and its member States had long been committed to international efforts to tackle climate change and set an example through robust policy changes at home. New legislation would be adopted to reduce emission in member States by at least 40 per cent by 2030 and all countries should join in that collective effort. Projects that allowed for the swift implementation of renewable energies would also be supported.

96. The European Union, which was the largest contributor of climate finance to developing countries and the world's largest aid donor, remained committed to contributing its share towards the developed countries' goal of jointly mobilizing $100 billion per year by 2020, and which had been extended up to 2025 in the Paris Agreement. The funding would come from a wide variety of public and private, bilateral and multilateral sources. Some 20 per cent of the 2014-2020 budget of the European Union would be spent on climate action, with around €200 million allocated to disaster risk reduction projects between 2014 and 2020. The European Investment Bank also provided some €2 billion per year in climate finance to developing countries, and planned to increase the proportion of its external climate finance activity to 35 per cent by 2020.

97. Investments must shift away from fossil fuels to a low-carbon path that continued to support economic growth and sustainable development. Other multilateral frameworks should also be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The landmark agreement reached by the International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly was therefore welcome. Under that agreement, flights between 65 countries, including all European Union member States, would be covered by a global market-based measure to offset carbon emissions from 2021. Similar measures must be taken on shipping.

98. Lastly, the European Union welcomed the important resolutions adopted at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in May 2016. They cut across most of the Sustainable Development Goals on issues such as sustainable consumption and production, oceans, climate, ecosystems and human health, and must be integrated into and followed up on by the United Nations system.

99. **Ms. Bajaña** (Nicaragua), speaking on behalf of the Central American Integration System, said that her region was involved in a dynamic integration process and that the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda required countries to continue strengthening sustainability policies and practices. Sustainable development was vitally important for their countries, which, owing to their shared challenges, were undertaking joint efforts to eradicate poverty, combat climate change, strengthen public security and fully restore citizens' rights, among other actions. In that regard, local governments played an active and crucial role.

100. Her region was increasingly affected by natural disasters, both in number and frequency, which in turn compromised food security and general well-being. With regard to disaster prevention, countries within the Integration System had been working together to undertake and follow up on actions aimed at managing the risks of natural disasters, combating the effects of climate change and protecting the environment, including through engagement with families and communities and by fostering the support of the private sector and the international community. Through the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America, the countries of the Integration System had agreed on a mandate to reduce disaster risk and mitigate the ensuing human and economic losses.

101. Despite such national and regional efforts, however, their States and especially their agricultural sectors remained exposed to other threats, including infrastructure vulnerability and the impacts of climate change and El Niño. Their Governments therefore highlighted the need for global cooperation and resources in managing risks and other sustainable development challenges. In that context, it was important for United Nations policies to respect different cultures and promote inclusive economic

management to achieve sustainable development in harmony with nature. With poverty eradication as its main goal, the international community must direct its efforts to the neediest countries, regardless of their geographical location. Progress with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda would not be possible without taking into consideration the needs of all Member States, in particular those with significant vulnerabilities, including middle-income countries.

102. **Ms. Deiye** (Nauru), speaking on behalf of the Group of Pacific Small Island Developing States, said that Agenda 21 had first formally recognized the special case of small island developing States with regard to sustainable development, highlighting their vulnerability, small size, limited resources and geographic dispersion. Those core features continued to be relevant, especially given the mounting negative effects of climate change. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda must therefore continue to address the special challenges and vulnerabilities of small island developing States.

103. The special case for the sustainable development of such States was outlined in the Samoa Pathway. Accordingly, interlinkages must be created when implementing the Samoa Pathway and the 2030 Agenda, and appropriate United Nations system support for small island developing States was still required. In particular, due consideration should be given to the initial findings of the comprehensive review of the Joint Inspection Unit of United Nations system support for small island developing States (A/71/267/Add.1) with a view to improving its functioning.

104. While capacity-building efforts continued to play an important role, they must also build national and institutional capacity for sustainable development. Moreover, as external shocks impeded the sustainable development of small island developing States, the international community must build resilience in line with the Sendai Framework.

105. As the ocean accounted for 98.5 per cent of the Group's size, it was the lifeblood of its economies, livelihoods, health, resilience and productivity. Tuna fisheries, for example, were a key source of revenue whose contribution to sustainable development was recognized through the observation of World Tuna Day. However, growing negative consequences produced by human activities threatened the oceans; it was therefore crucial to fully implement Sustainable Development Goal 14.

106. The Group called for greater ambition and response to the grave, even existential, threat posed by climate change and for those who had not yet ratified the Paris Agreement to do so.

107. **Ms. Natividad** (Philippines) said that the 2030 Agenda underscored the indivisible and integrated nature of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, which were nowhere more critical than in the area of disaster risk reduction. Her country had experienced first-hand how even a single disaster could reverse advances in poverty reduction, inclusive growth and sustainable development. In that regard, the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies should substantially increase by 2020, in accordance with the Sendai Framework. The indicators developed for the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework must moreover be coherent.

108. Natural disasters were not just sudden bursts of fury, but could also be reoccurring and long-lasting phenomena. From late 2015 until May 2016, her country had weathered one of the worst El Niño events in its history. Despite the existence of a national action plan on food and energy security, health and public safety, almost 8 million Filipinos had been affected by drought and agricultural production losses had reached more than $300 million. Greater intergovernmental coordination and experience-sharing were necessary to combat the effects of El Niño and La Niña, as well as desertification and sandstorms.

109. As the frequency and intensity of such hazards had been exacerbated by climate change, her delegation called for climate justice and the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities in implementing obligations under the Paris Agreement.

110. Sustainable Development Goal 7 on access to energy also facilitated the achievement of the other Goals. Countries must increase their share of renewable energy and promote cleaner and more energy-efficient technologies. Her Government was facilitating a national policy review and framework on

energy in accordance with a low-carbon development pathway.

111. As one of the world's megadiverse countries, the Philippines welcomed the mainstreaming of biodiversity into the sustainable development agenda through Goal 15; biodiversity loss was directly impacted by climate change, which in turn affected poverty eradication and food security. Member States that had not yet done so were encouraged to ratify or accede to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Similarly, biodiversity conservation would require the protection of mountain ecosystems and communities that were highly vulnerable to climate change, extreme weather events and land degradation. However, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would ultimately require adequate funding and strong, inclusive and integrated partnerships at all levels.

112. **Ms. Namgyel** (Bhutan) said that the principle of leaving no one behind was a fundamental component of the 2030 Agenda. As a country with highly biodiverse mountain ecosystems, Bhutan recognized that sustainable mountain development was essential to the fight against climate change. Mountain systems, as a reservoir and provider of global goods and services, were essential building blocks for long-term sustainable global development, poverty reduction and the transition towards a green economy. Consequently, increased levels of investment and funding for sustainable development in mountain regions at the global, regional, national and community levels were extremely important not only for mountain countries, but for the global community at large.

113. Sustainable development required a holistic approach that combined environmental protection and conservation with economic development and poverty reduction. While her country had performed well with regard to the environmental pillar, it would strive to do more on the economic front. In that regard, Sustainable Development Goal 7 on access to energy would play a key role. Around one in seven people worldwide lacked access to electricity. Without electricity, women and girls were forced to spend hours fetching water, children could not do their homework at night, businesses could not become competitive and countries could not power their economies or create jobs for young people.

114. Hydropower also had an important role to play in achieving Goal 7. When properly planned and implemented, hydropower could be an affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern technology to help communities, nations and regions acquire a reliable supply of electricity, thus supporting economic and social development worldwide. Bhutan therefore saw hydropower as a central pillar of its sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts. Given its ability to provide multiple services, hydropower could also contribute to other Sustainable Development Goals on water, resilient infrastructure and climate change.

115. Harmony with nature was the "middle path" approach to sustainable development, which called for the preservation of the relationship between the people and environment of Bhutan that had been forged over centuries. Harmony with nature was therefore at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and the need for sustainable consumption and production.

116. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals aimed to bring about a world in harmony with nature and without poverty or hunger by 2030: a world where the poor did not have to pay the bill for the excesses of the rich. The 2030 Agenda sought to integrate and balance the three pillars of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. However, the eradication of poverty and hunger were necessarily the first priorities, without which no development could be sustainable.

117. His country would present its voluntary national review in 2017, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by sharing its experiences, challenges and lessons learned. India had also integrated the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals into its national development strategies and dedicated one day of each parliamentary session to discussing progress on the Goals. The success of India in sustaining robust economic growth to eradicate poverty would contribute in no small measure to the global achievement of the Goals.

118. However, the effective implementation of nationally owned and country-led sustainable development required

financing strategies, resource mobilization, the support of global partnerships and the contribution of all relevant stakeholders. The international community must use the opportunity of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to chart the course for the United Nations development system, maintaining an unrelenting focus on poverty eradication. The additional financing required for any other purpose could not come at the expense of development funding, which the developing world continued to await.

119. Climate change was a critical component of sustainable development, as it affected public health, food and water security, migration, and peace and security. To that end, India had deposited its instrument of ratification for the Paris Agreement in October 2016. His country's submission of its intended nationally determined contribution was a sign of its commitment to the fight against climate change. India would reduce its emissions by 35 per cent, build 40 per cent of power capacity from non-fossil fuels and create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 billion tonnes through afforestation.

120. With regard to disaster risk reduction, India, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, would host the biennial Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in November 2016.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.